Title: Need to take effective steps to purchase the surplus tobacco from farmers in Andhra Pradesh.-Laid

SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU (SRIKAKULAM): For the farmers of Andhra Pradesh the worst is still not over. After the failure of the cotton crop they are bearing the after effects of a bumper tobacco crop. The country has seen a record production of 135 million Kg. of tobacco this year, on top of that there is an unauthorised production of 40 million Kg. of tobacco and a backlog of 25 million Kg. of tobacco. This has caused a glut in the market leading to a drastic fall in tobacco prices from Rs.85/Kg. to Rs.45/Kg. over the last three months alone. The farmers were eventually forced to burn standing tobacco crops. More than 15 million Kg. of tobacco crop was burnt in Andhra Pradesh alone.

With the tobacco majors in India purchasing only 40 per cent of their requirement, there is no likelihood of this surplus finding enough buyers. As if this was not enough, competition from African countries is eating into Indian tobacco exports. Countries like Zimbabwe are selling tobacco at rates which are at least 40 per cent below international prices. China, Brazil and the U.S. are also not far behind with their tobacco prices, 10 per cent below the price of last year's.

It is high time that the Government should do something for the tobacco growers before the farmers again take the extreme step of committing suicide.